

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Non-elected claims 3-5 are requested to be cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1 and 2 are currently being amended.

Claims 6-12 are being added.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-2 and 6-12 are now pending in this application.

The abstract stands objected to. In response, a replacement abstract is presented.

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, with regard to certain phrases said to lack sufficient antecedent basis. Applicant respectfully disagrees, but to advance prosecution has amended claim 1; claim 2 has been similarly amended regarding antecedent basis.

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over JP 04-135704 in view of Tamura (US Patent No. 4,973,440) and further in view of Nakamura (US Patent No. 5,202,071). In response, applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to recite "maintaining the endless resin mat between the lower and upper belts until the endless resin mat is ready to be used in a heated molding press." Applicant respectfully submits that this feature, disclosed for example in paragraph 8, is neither taught nor suggested by the relied-upon prior art, either alone or in combination. For example, JP '704 winds up its SMC sheet on a take-up roll 18 which is then "introduced

into an aging oven to perform final aging.” Likewise, Tamura ‘440 forms its material into “the shape of sheet or plate and then put to storage.” Col. 7, lines 48-49. In Nakamura ‘071, “the rolls 9, 10, 11, and 12 are cooled by water”; in other words, Nakamura ‘071 teaches only cooling the mat (col. 2, line 55; col. 3, line 12; col. 4, lines 23-24), in contrast to the temperature control rolls 16a-16f of JP ‘074 which are “controlled to the same temp[erature] as [the] aging temp[erature].”

Claim 9 is newly presented and requires spreading the resin mixture onto a lower belt and an upper belt “without interposing a film between the resin mixture and a respective belt.” This feature is supported, for example, in paragraphs 7, 16, and 22 of the specification. In stark contrast, the relied-upon prior art specifically teaches interposing “upper and lower carrier films 9, 3” supplied from film supply rolls 8, 2 (JP ‘074); “plastic films 4a and 4b” (Tamura ‘440 at col. 7, lines 39-40); and “thin adhesion preventing plastic film” 13 and 14 (Nakamura ‘071 at col. 4, lines 12-13 and 17).

Accordingly, applicant submits that independent claims 1 and 9, along with their respective dependent claims, distinguish over the relied-upon prior art.

Applicant submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 26 July 2006

FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
Customer Number: 22428
Telephone: (202) 672-5413
Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

By George E. Quillin

George E. Quillin
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 32,792